SECRET EMPIRE™

NICK SPENCER • ANDREA SORRENTINO • ROD REIS

WE CAN STOP--UP AHEAD--

NO-- NO, IT'S FINE, I JUST NEED...

WHEN HOPE RETURNED, IT WAS NOTHING BUT A GLIMMER.

SOMETHING YOU COULD ONLY SEE IN A CERTAIN LIGHT.

...A LITTLE REST.

YOU'RE *HURT.* LET ME SEE--

IT DOESN'T MATTER.

THAT MONSTER--HE GOT HIS *FANGS* IN ME.

POISON.

WE HAVE TO FIND YOU *HELP.*

THERE IS NO HELP. JUST MORE *EVIL,* LURKING IN THE SHADOWS OF... *WHATEVER* THIS PLACE IS.

YOU ARE THE ONLY GOOD I HAVE FOUND. TELL ME--

--YOU SAID YOU WERE TRYING TO GET ***HOME***...DO YOU REMEMBER IT? OR HOW YOU ENDED UP IN THIS PLACE?

NO. I JUST-- WOKE UP OUT HERE--IN THIS... FOREST. CAN'T SAY I REMEMBER MUCH OF ***ANYTHING.*** EXCEPT--

NAME! RANK! SERIAL NUMBER!

--THE BASICS.

BUT I FEEL IT. THERE'S SOMEWHERE I'M SUPPOSED TO GO-- SOMEPLACE THAT ***NEEDS*** ME. IF I COULD JUST--

HNNNN...

YOU NEED ***WATER.*** THERE'S A STREAM NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE, I CAN CARRY YOU-- JUST RELAX--

--CAN'T BE MORE THAN AN HOUR'S WALK.

I--I DON'T THINK I'LL MAKE IT THAT LONG--

DON'T SAY THAT. DAWN'S NOT FAR OFF...

COF! COF! COF!

IT WAS DISTANT, BUT WE FIXED OUR EYES ON THAT LITTLE SHINING CONSTELLATION--

--AND PRAYED TO THE ***BRIGHTEST STAR*** WE COULD FIND.

UH, SO, HEY, GREETINGS, EVERYBODY. THANK YOU FOR COMING, HOPE YOU LIKED THE SNACKS WE PUT OUT...

MY NAME IS ***PETER QUILL,*** BUT OBVIOUSLY, YOU AND EVERYONE ELSE IN THE UNIVERSE KNOWS ME AS THE ***AMAZING STAR-LORD.*** THESE ARE MY ASSOCIATES, ROCKET AND--

I AM GROOT.

WE ARE COMING TO YOU TODAY ON BEHALF OF THE PLANET EARTH, MY HOMEWORLD. YOU PROBABLY KNOW IT-- LITTLE, BLUE, PRIMITIVE, LOTTA GOOD MUSIC...

I AM GROOT.

MORE OF A ***WU-TANG*** GUY, MYSELF.

EARTH IS UNDER ATTACK. ITS MOST POWERFUL COUNTRY GOT TAKEN OVER BY THIS EVIL ORGANIZATION CALLED ***HYDRA--***

--WHICH TURNED OUT TO BE LED BY A GUY WE ALL THOUGHT WAS A ***HERO***--STEVE ROGERS, ***CAPTAIN AMERICA.***

NOW HOLD ON--

--NOT EVERYBODY BUYS THAT THIS IS THE ***REAL*** STEVE ROGERS. COULD BE A CLONE, A ROBOT, A DOPPELWHATEVER. WHO KNOWS?

SO TO KEEP IT STRAIGHT, LOTTA FOLKS ARE GOING WITH A NICKNAME-- HYDRA CAP, CAPTAIN OCTOPUSHEAD--I'M PARTIAL TO ***STEVIL***--

NOW, HERE'S THE BIG PART--HE'S BUILT THIS FORCE FIELD AROUND THE PLANET, TRAPPING EVERYBODY ON THE SURFACE.

AND HE'S SICCING A ***BIG-ASS ARMY OF CHITAURI*** ON THE FEW GOOD GUYS STUCK ON THE OTHER SIDE OF IT.

SO YEAH, THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE. OUR FRIENDS HAVEN'T HAD ANY LUCK BRINGING DOWN THIS SHIELD. THAT'S GONNA TAKE A ***LOT*** OF FIREPOWER, IF IT'S EVEN POSSIBLE. THAT'S WHY WE ***NEED*** YOUR HELP.

YOU AND ALL YOUR BIG-SHOT EMPIRES.

HM. INTERESTING. WE ARE ALL, OF COURSE, FAMILIAR WITH EARTH AND ITS CITIZENS.

VERY FAMILIAR.

AND JUST TO BE CLEAR--YOU'RE TELLING US ***EVERY EARTHLING*** HAS BEEN TRAPPED INSIDE THE SHIELD--

--WHILE THE FEW REMAINING OUTSIDE IT ARE FACING ***CERTAIN DEATH*** AT THE HANDS OF THE HORDE?

THAT'S... PRETTY MUCH THE GIST OF IT, YEAH.

DEATH TO EARTH!

HAIL-- WHAT WAS IT AGAIN?

HYDRA!

HEY, DANVERS, IT'S ME--UH, THIS DIDN'T GO SO WELL--

THESE GUYS **REALLY** DO NOT LIKE EARTH, APPARENTLY.

I APPRECIATE YOU TRYING, PETER. I REALLY DO. BUT IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME--

--WE ACTUALLY HAVE COMPANY RIGHT NOW.

THEY'RE GETTING MORE FREQUENT, CAROL. WHEN IT STARTED, WAVES ONLY HIT EVERY FEW DAYS--

NOW IT'S A MATTER OF HOURS. TRUST ME, I KNOW.

STATION INTEGRITY IS **BEYOND** COMPROMISED. YESTERDAY WE ALMOST LOST THE **OXYGEN SUPPLY**--

--NOT THAT WE HAVE MUCH OF IT LEFT TO BEGIN WITH. WE'RE **BARELY** KEEPING THIS PLACE AFLOAT--

--AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF BODIES TO HELP US DO JUST THAT. IF WE DON'T FIND A WAY TO BRING DOWN THAT **SHIELD**--

WE'LL FIND A WAY. WE CAN TRY TO CONTACT **GALACTUS** AGAIN, MAYBE--

GALACTUS ISN'T **COMING**, MONICA. **NOBODY** IS. AND THE ONE PERSON ANYWHERE NEAR THAT POWERFUL ON THIS SHIP--

"--IS **QUASAR**. AND SHE'S NOT WAKING UP."

SECRET EMPIRE

STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, HAS CLAIMED THE UNITED STATES FOR HYDRA. UNDER HIS RUTHLESS NEW REGIME, INHUMANS ARE CLOSELY MONITORED, AND MANY HAVE BEEN IMPRISONED IN CAMPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. EARTH'S MOST POWERFUL HEROES ARE STRANDED BEYOND EARTH'S PLANETARY DEFENSE SHIELD, AT THE MERCY OF A CHITAURI INVASION--OR TRAPPED INSIDE THE DARKFORCE BUBBLE THAT ENVELOPS NEW YORK CITY.

THE HANDFUL OF HEROES REMAINING DISCOVERED THAT A COSMIC CUBE WAS BEHIND STEVE ROGERS' SINISTER CHANGE OF HEART, AND MIGHT BE ABLE TO CHANGE HIM BACK--IF THE SCATTERED PIECES CAN BE REUNITED. BUT TO FIND THE CUBE SHARDS, THEY'D HAVE TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY--AND SAM WILSON, WHO ABANDONED THE MANTLE OF CAPTAIN AMERICA, ISN'T INTERESTED IN HELPING THEM CROSS THE BORDER. MEANWHILE, BLACK WIDOW AND A GROUP OF YOUNGER HEROES ARE SEEKING A LESS IDEALISTIC WAY TO END STEVE ROGERS' RULE...

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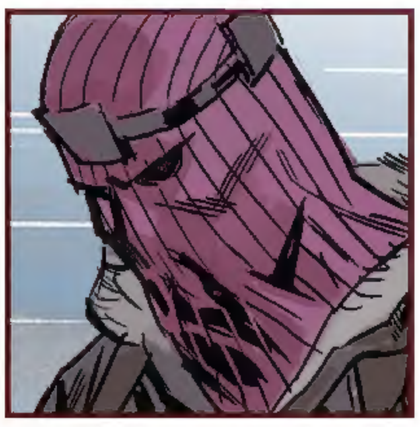
Hydra

Hydra Command

Captain America



Baron Zemo

Kraken

Avengers

Scarlet Witch

Superior Octopus

Black Ant

Taskmaster

At Large

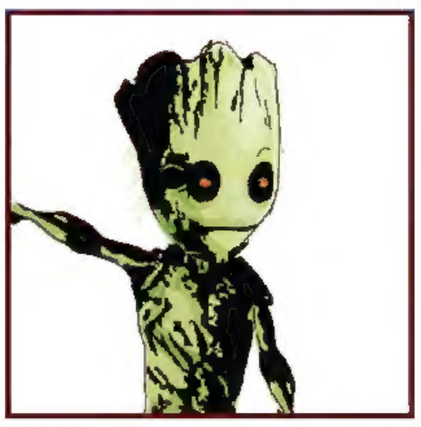
Sam Wilson

Maria Hill

Beyond the Shield

Star-Lord

Rocket Raccoon



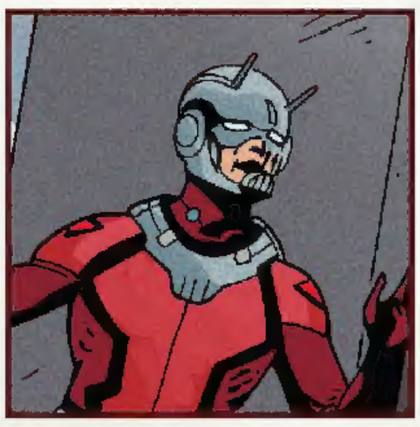
Groot

Captain Marvel

Spectrum

The Underground

Tony Stark (A.I.)



Ant-Man

Hercules

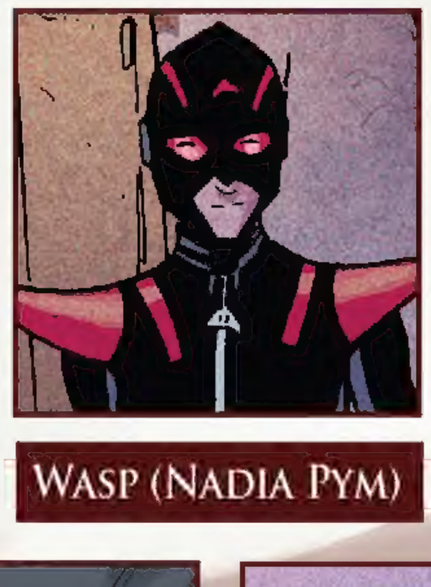
Quicksilver

Mockingbird

The Red Room

Black Widow

Hulk (Amadeus Cho)

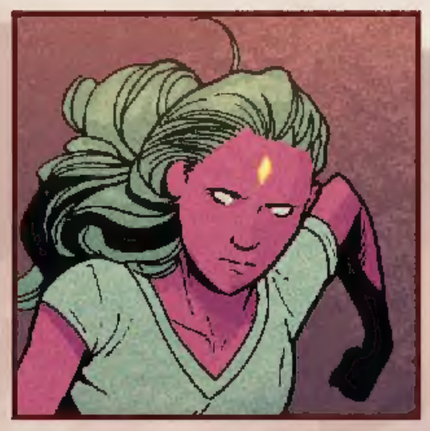


Wasp (Nadia Pym)

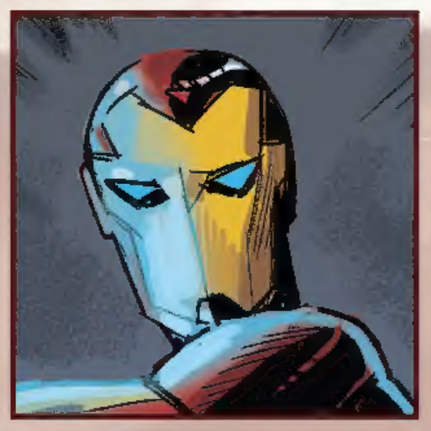
Spider-Man

Captured

Sharon Carter



Viv Vision



Ironheart

Falcon

NEWARK.

I MUST SAY I'M SURPRISED. YOU'VE DONE QUITE *WELL* FOR YOURSELF--

--FOR A MAN WHO USED TO WEAR A *BOOMERANG* ON HIS FOREHEAD, MR. MYERS.

WELL, THANK YOU, NAT--CAN I CALL YOU "NAT"? I REALLY DO APPRECIATE IT. I'M AS SURPRISED AS ANYONE, BELIEVE YOU ME.

I GUESS I'M JUST USED TO BEING A SMALL FISH IN A BIG POND, YOU KNOW?

SO WHEN EVERYBODY WAS FIGHTING TO "KEEP THEIR TERRITORY" OR WHATEVER, I UNDERSTOOD THE *GAME,* MANAGED TO CARVE OUT SOMETHING FOR MYSELF, UNDER THE RADAR-LIKE.

IT PROBABLY DIDN'T HURT THAT NEARLY EVERY MAJOR CRIME BOSS FOUND THEMSELVES TRAPPED IN THE *DARKFORCE* WHILE YOU WERE HIDING OUT HERE IN *NEW JERSEY.*

EH, MAYBE. POINT IS, I GOT MY OWN RESTAURANT NOW. YOU SHOULD TRY THE *WINGS.*

I'M NOT HERE TO EAT YOUR *FOOD,* FRED.

VEGAN, I GET IT. OKAY, WELL, THE SPECIAL SOMEBODY YOU REQUESTED A MEETING WITH IS IN THE BACK. YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF PRIVACY, AND SEEING AS YOU'VE ALREADY PAID ME MY FEE FOR FACILITATING--

THANK YOU.

NO WORRIES, WIDOW, JUST REMEMBER--S'JUST LIKE A BOOMERANG, I DO SOMETHING FOR YA, IT COMES BACK AROUND!

YEAH, I SAW THE CARD.

WELL, WELL, WELL--NATASHA ROMANOFF...

MARIA HILL.

THIS IS *NOT* WHERE I EXPECTED TO FIND *YOU.*

WHY NOT? ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORIST INSURGENCIES ACTUALLY HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF WATCHING EACH OTHER'S BACKS.

AND FRED'S NOT SO BAD--YOU REALLY *SHOULD* TRY THE WINGS. THEY ARE FANTASTIC.

IS THAT WHAT YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF NOW? A TERRORIST?

WELL, I'D GO WITH "FREEDOM FIGHTER" OR JUST "PERSON WHO DIDN'T CLOSE THEIR EYES AND LET THE DAMN WORLD GET TAKEN OVER," BUT HEY, I DON'T WRITE THE HEADLINES. AND EVER SINCE ST. LOUIS--

THERE WERE A LOT OF CASUALTIES THAT DAY, MARIA.

"NEEDLESS ONES."

AND ALSO FOUR HYDRA GENERALS. IT'S CALLED AN OVERTON WINDOW, NAT, AND IF YOU LOOK OUT IT, YOU'LL SEE THE RULES ARE *DIFFERENT* NOW. TURNS OUT I WAS JUST *WAY* AHEAD OF THE CURVE.

BUT THEN, FROM WHAT I HEAR--

--IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU'VE ALREADY COME AROUND TO MY WAY OF THINKING.

WE'RE NOT HERE TO PLAY CATCH-UP...

NO, OF COURSE NOT. AND I'M HAPPY TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR NEW MISSION AND ALL. THIS IS WHAT I WAS ABLE TO GET MY HANDS ON--

HIS *SOCIAL CALENDAR?!* THAT'S *IT?!*

IT'S THE BEST I COULD DO-- NOT EASY TO GET INTEL WHEN THE INFORMANTS KNOW THEY'LL WIND UP FACING A *FIRING SQUAD--*

"--AND MOST OF MY BEST PEOPLE ARE WASTING AWAY IN SIN AND CROSSBONES' *SUPER-PRISON...*"

BUT THERE ARE GOOD OPPORTUNITIES IN HERE. PLACES FOR YOU TO GET A *CLEAN SHOT.*

AND WHEN YOU DO, ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU POST SOME GOOD PICTURES.

YOU'RE DISGUSTING.

WHAT? HE GETS TO EXECUTE HALF MY FRIENDS AND LEVEL A CITY, BUT *I'M* THE BAD GUY FOR WANTING TO MAKE HIS CORPSE MY NEW iPHONE WALLPAPER?

WE ALL COPE IN DIFFERENT WAYS. BESIDES--

--WHO ARE *YOU* TO BE GIVING LECTURES ON DECENCY ANYHOW?

I MEAN, *KIDS,* NAT?

"EVEN *I'D* NEVER SINK THAT LOW."

YOU MADE IT THROUGH THE OUTER PROTECTIONS? FINE, TRAITORS--

--BUT IN 60 SECONDS, MY BOMB WILL CLEANSE THIS PLACE WITH *FIRE.* AND--

00:00:60

OKAY, PEOPLE-- WHERE'S THE *BOMB?*

I HAVE SCANNED THE SURROUNDING AREA AND CAN FIND NO EXPLOSIVE DEVICE--

BECAUSE SHE *IS* THE BOMB. AND I DON'T MEAN THAT IN A BAD '90s CATCHPHRASE KIND OF WAY.

IRONHEART'S RIGHT.

00:00:47

SHE INJECTED SOMETHING INTO HER *HEART*--IT'S PUMPING OUT INCREASINGLY POTENT NANOSIZED *FISSION BOMBS.* ONCE THERE'S ENOUGH OF THEM--

AIN'T NO WAY WE GET ALL THESE PEOPLE OUT OF HERE IN TIME.

AND THE BLAST IMPACT WILL BE TOO GREAT TO SHIELD THEM--

THEN WE GIVE THEM NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. IF THE BOMB IS IN HER *BLOOD*--

00:00:32

--THEN I WILL MEET IT THERE.

00:00:24

NADIA--MY INITIAL ASSESSMENT SHOWS THERE ARE 39 ACTIVATED CELLS. AT YOUR CURRENT RATE OF ELIMINATION--

VIV'S SAYING YOU DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME. YOU'LL NEVER *MAKE* IT--

NOT WITH *THAT* BADITUDE, AMADEUS!

00:00:17

I CAN *DO* THIS-- I CAN--

00:00:08

NADIA! HURRY, WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF--

00:00:01

THOOM

YOU HAVE TO BE KIDDING ME. WE LOST? AGAIN?!

SERIOUSLY-- THIS IS SOME KOBAYASHI MARU @#$! RIGHT HERE.

YEAH, HOW DID CHRIS PINE BEAT THAT THING?

CHRIS PINE? =SIGH=

I WEEP FOR THE FUTURE.

AND FOR THE RECORD, THIS EXERCISE WAS ENTIRELY WINNABLE--

--JUST LIKE THE *LAST* SEVEN. CAN SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT SIMPLE SOLUTION WAS AVAILABLE, BUT NOT EVEN *CONSIDERED* HERE?

STOP HER HEART.

THAT'S RIGHT, MILES. STOP THE *HEART*, STOP THE *BOMB* FROM GOING OFF.

YEAH--THERE'S A *REASON* WE DIDN'T CONSIDER THAT...

SERIOUSLY-- THIS IS *POINTLESS*. I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE TRAINING US. SPY STUFF! *NINJA* STUFF!

AND I AM.

ALL OF YOU KNOW HOW TO FIGHT. HOW TO ANALYZE AND SOLVE PROBLEMS.

WHAT YOU *DON'T* KNOW HOW TO DO IS MAKE THE IMPOSSIBLE CHOICES. FOR INSTANCE--

--WHEN YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ONE MONSTER DYING AND 100 INNOCENT PEOPLE BEING KILLED, WHAT DO YOU DO?

FIND ANOTHER WAY...

AND WHEN THAT DOESN'T EXIST? WHEN THERE'S NO TIME TO COME UP WITH ANOTHER IDEA, OR TRY SOMETHING ELSE--WHEN IT'S DOWN TO HIM OR THEM?

THE OLD GUARD IS BEING PICKED OFF ONE BY ONE. PRETTY SOON, YOU WILL BE ALL THAT'S LEFT. AND WHEN THAT DAY COMES, YOU NEED TO BE WILLING TO FIGHT THE WAY A *WAR* DEMANDS.

I WISH THIS WAS NOT THE WORLD WE LEFT YOU. BUT IT IS. AND IF YOU WANT TO SURVIVE IN IT--

--YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO GIVE UP CHILDISH THINGS, ONCE AND FOR ALL.

MONTANA.

NO.

SAM, COME ON, WAIT UP--

WE HAD A *DEAL*, ANT-MAN. YOU JUST BROKE IT.

WELL, IN MY DEFENSE, I'M A *VERY* DISHONEST PERSON.

SAM, *PLEASE*--IF YOU WOULD JUST HEAR US OUT--

YOU PEOPLE--YOU REALLY DON'T *GET* IT, DO YOU? I'M *NOT INTERESTED.*

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN PLAYING DRESS-UP, FIGHTING THE BAD GUYS, ACTING LIKE A DAMN FOOL. I GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO.

HH. LIKE *WHAT?*

LOOK AT YOU. WASTING AWAY IN SOME DISGUSTING BAR IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. SMUGGLING FOR MONEY?

QUICKSILVER'S RIGHT, SAM--WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN.

SORRY?

SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVEN. THAT'S HOW MANY PEOPLE I'VE MANAGED TO GET ACROSS THE BORDER TO SOMEWHERE *SAFE*, TONY.

SOMEWHERE THEY WON'T BE LOCKED UP, OR KILLED, OR *WORSE*. AND *BELIEVE* ME, THERE'S WORSE.

I DID MY TIME AS CAPTAIN AMERICA, TRYING TO CHANGE THINGS. CAUSED ME A LOT OF PAIN AND HEARTBREAK, AND AT THE END, I HAD A WHOLE LOT OF NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT.

I'M *DONE* TRYING TO MAKE THE WORLD SOMETHING IT CLEARLY DOESN'T WANT TO BE. I'M JUST GONNA DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP THE PEOPLE THAT NEED HELP, AND LEAVE THE REVOLUTION TO GENIUSES LIKE YOU ALL. BESIDES--

--I DON'T KNOW IF YOU *NOTICED,* BUT NOBODY IS FIGHTING IN THE STREETS ANYMORE. MOST FOLKS GAVE UP QUICK.

THEY SEEM TO BE PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT LOOKING THE OTHER WAY. HELL, FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE, HYDRA SUITS THEM *JUST FINE.* SO MAYBE THIS IS WHO WE ARE AFTER ALL. MAYBE THIS IS US GETTING WHAT WE *DESERVE.*

AND WHAT ABOUT THE CAPTAIN? WHAT DOES *HE* DESERVE?

WHAT'S HERC TALKING ABOUT?

WE FIGURED IT OUT, SAM--WHAT HAPPENED. THAT'S NOT THE REAL STEVE.

YOU THINK I DON'T *KNOW* THAT?

IT WAS THE COSMIC CUBE. THOSE THINGS SUCK. IT MADE HIM LIKE THIS, BUT--WE CAN *FIX* IT. TONY INVENTED A WHATCHAMAJIG--

IT'S WHAT I DO. THE FRAGMENTS OF THE CUBE THAT CHANGED HIM ARE OUT THERE, SCATTERED. WE JUST-- NEED TO GET OUT OF THE COUNTRY, TO FIND THEM.

I GET THAT IT SOUNDS CRAZY, BUT--YOU KNOW HE WOULD DO IT FOR US. THIS IS OUR ONE CHANCE, SAM--

--THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO SAVE HIM.

HYDRA YOUTH

ANNUAL SCIENCE FAIR ON THE MALL

AND WHAT IS THIS, THEN?

I-IT'S AN INHUMAN DETECTOR THAT'S SOLAR POWERED, SIR. SO YOU CAN BRING IT WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO CAMPING, OR FOR EMERGENCIES--

INHUMAN DETECTOR

HM, INTERESTING-- THAT'S GOOD WORK, SON.

KEEP IT UP.

WHY AM I HERE AGAIN?

BECAUSE YOU NEED YOU SOME FRESH AIR, SHARON. YOU'VE BARELY LEFT YOUR APARTMENT IN WEEKS.

WELL, MY "GUARDS" HERE ARE FUNNY ABOUT THAT.

ALSO, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT ***ENJOY*** THIS, HEAVEN FORBID. THE BRIGHTEST YOUNG MINDS OF HYDRA'S REFORMED EDUCATION SYSTEM, SUBMITTING THEIR PROJECTS, COMPETING...

...AND YOU KNOW, AVERAGE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES--THEY'RE ALL WAY ***UP*** SINCE WE TOOK OVER.

YEAH, WELL, I CAN'T ***IMAGINE*** WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH THE UNDER-PERFORMERS.

DON'T BE DRAMATIC. AND PLEASE, AT LEAST TRY TO LOOK A LITTLE LESS MISERABLE--

IF YOU WANTED SOMEONE TO SHOW OFF FOR THE CAMERAS, WHY DIDN'T YOU BRING THAT CRAZY ***WITCH*** THAT THINKS SHE'S YOUR ***MOTHER?***

WATCH YOURSELF, SHARON. YOU CAN SAY WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE ABOUT ME, BUT ELISA IS ***MADAME HYDRA***-- AND I OWE HER MY LIFE MORE THAN ONCE OVER.

YOU OF ALL PEOPLE HAVE NO RIGHT TO--

=SIGH= LOOK, I'M SORRY. MAYBE THIS WAS A BAD IDEA. IT'S JUST--THE WORLD IS WATCHING. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE PROJECT AN IMAGE OF STRENGTH--OF ***UNITY.***

AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THEY RESPECT YOU. ***I*** RESPECT YOU. IF YOU WOULD--

S-SUPREME LEADER? I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, SIR, BUT--

HAIL HYDRA!

"--YOU'RE NEEDED IN THE SITUATION ROOM."

AT EASE, ALL--KRAKEN, SITREP?

YES, SUPREME LEADER--BASED ON ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE A CONFIRMED LOCATION ON ANOTHER OF THE MISSING COSMIC CUBE FRAGMENTS.

GOOD. AND WHERE'S THIS ONE?

"THE CITY OF ATLANTIS, SIR."

MORE SPECIFICALLY, A TEMPLE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE KINGDOM. IT'S REMOTE, BUT WELL-GUARDED BY THE WARRIOR PRIESTS WHO SERVE THERE.

WHO SERVE ***NAMOR,*** YOU MEAN. FINE. AND OUR SQUAD IS ON SITE?

YES, SIR.

GOOD--PROCEED.

"LET'S HOPE THIS GOES BETTER THAN ZOLA'S FORAY INTO ***WAKANDA*** LAST WEEK."

"OF COURSE, SIR. THE GOOD NEWS IS WE'RE IN VERY CAPABLE HANDS RIGHT NOW--

"--BARON ZEMO IS LEADING THE CHARGE."

DON'T WORRY, STEVEN. WE WILL NOT FAIL YOU TODAY. I WILL BRING BACK WHAT WAS STOLEN FROM YOU.

THEM TWO BEING BEST PALS IS MESSED UP BUT KINDA SWEET, RIGHT? JEALOUS.

I HAVE NO NEED FOR FRIENDS, TASKMASTER, YOU CRETIN.

UH-HUH. AND THAT'S WHY THE STUFF YOU PUT ON THE DVR KEEPS DISAPPEARING, OCK.

THOR

AND SO YOU SEE, FAIR PRIESTS--THE TIME FOR PRAYERS HAS PASSED--

--ALL THAT'S LEFT IS THE ANSWER. WHERE IS THE *FRAGMENT?*

I WILL BETRAY NOTHING. I WILL TELL YOU *NOTHING.*

COMMENDABLE, OLD MAN--

--BUT THE *SCARLET WITCH* WILL TELL ME ALL I NEED TO KNOW.

GNNNNN--

LOCATION CONFIRMED, SUPREME LEADER!

"BLACK ANT IS EXTRACTING."

EASY...EASY... *PLEASE* DON'T DROP THE BIG REALITY-WARPING FRAGILE OBJECT, ERIC. YOUR BOSSES WILL BE MAD.

OCTAVIUS. CONFIRM ITS VALIDITY.

DON'T RUSH ME, ZEMO. I *HATE* IT WHEN YOU RUSH ME.

CONFIRMING NOW...

NEGATIVE. REPEAT-- NEGATIVE. IT'S A FAKE.

NAMOR KNEW WE WERE COMING. WHO *KNOWS* HOW MANY OF THESE HE'S PLANTED.

HEH, HEH--MY KING-- HE IS NOT JUST A WISE MAN--HE IS A *CLEVER* MAN.

HM, ISN'T HE, THOUGH?

GETTING *YOU* TO DIE IN HIS PLACE.

STEVEN-- I AM SORRY I LET YOU DOWN--

IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, HELMUT. GET YOUR TEAM OUT OF THERE.

AS FAR AS THE TEMPLE, SIR--WE'VE OUTLINED A FEW POTENTIAL *CLEANUP* OPTIONS. WE CAN MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN ATTACK BY SEPARATIST TERRORISTS--

NO NEED TO GO THROUGH ALL THAT TROUBLE, KRAKEN. DESTROY IT.

AH, SIR, JUST TO MAKE YOU AWARE--THIS IS THE OLDEST TEMPLE IN ATLANTIS. IT IS THEIR *HOLIEST PLACE.* THEY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CONSIDER THIS AN ACT OF *WAR.*

AND THAT'S UNFORTUNATE--

--BUT NAMOR NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND--IF HE WANTS TO HIDE WHAT IS OURS--

"--THEN WE WILL LEAVE HIM WITH NOWHERE TO HIDE."

WELL, IF THAT'S ENOUGH DISAPPOINTMENT FOR ONE WEEK--

I APOLOGIZE AGAIN, SUPREME LEADER. THE INTELLIGENCE FAILURE IS ON MY SHOULDERS.

BUT WE DO HAVE ANOTHER IMMEDIATE LEAD, AS YOU KNOW-- AND GORGON AND THE HIVE ARE STANDING BY.

NO, I'LL HANDLE THIS ONE *MYSELF.*

ASSEMBLE THE AVENGERS AND AWAIT MY MARK--

"--OUR NEXT TARGET IS BY FAR THE MOST DANGEROUS."

WHERE ARE WE GOING? THIS IS TAKING TOO LONG. IF YOU GIVE ME THE COORDINATES, I CAN GO ON AHEAD--

NO CHANCE, PIETRO. YOU'RE JUST GONNA HAVE TO BE PATIENT. I TOLD YOU I WOULD GET YOU ALL OUT OF THE COUNTRY--

--BUT WE ARE GONNA DO THIS ***MY*** WAY, UNDERSTOOD?

NO ONE JUMPS AHEAD. NO ONE LOOKS FOR TROUBLE. YOU ***SEE*** TROUBLE, YOU KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN. I AM DOING MY ***JOB***, NOT JOINING UP WITH YOUR LITTLE ADVENTURER GANG. THIS IS THE CONTRACT--

--TONY SAYS THIS FIRST FRAGMENT THING IS IN BRAZIL, SO I'LL GET YOU TO BRAZIL. YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN FROM THERE.

BRAZIL?

THAT LITTLE INVENTION OF YOURS DIDN'T SAY ***THAT'S*** WHERE IT WAS. IT SAID--

SSSHH. AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL WE'RE ACROSS THE BORDER, BOBBI.

WE DON'T WANT ANYONE TO LOSE THEIR NERVE. CONSIDERING THE ***REAL*** DESTINATION AND WHO'S THERE?

"THEY'D BE ***FOOLS*** NOT TO RUN THE OTHER WAY."

AND THEN WANDA SAID, "VISION, YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED EAT THE CARVINGS!"

HEH HEH HEH. WE HAD SUCH A WONDERFUL THANKSGIVING THAT YEAR. COME TO THINK OF IT--

--THAT WAS THE LAST TIME WE WERE ALL TOGETHER LIKE THAT.

SIR-- I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU.

WE'VE DETECTED INCOMING AERIAL TRAFFIC. MULTIPLE SHIPS, ACTUALLY.

YES, I DETECTED THAT AS WELL. THANK YOU, JARVIS.

SHALL I ACTIVATE THE PERIMETER DEFENSES, MASTER PYM?

HM? NO. NO, OF COURSE NOT. THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.

IN FACT-- OPEN THE GATES. LET'S BE SURE TO GIVE THEM A WARM WELCOME--

--IT'LL BE SO **NICE** TO SEE OUR FAMILY AGAIN.

OUR PATHS WERE CONVERGING NOW--

--THE DESTINATION IN SIGHT.

WE'RE HERE.

IT'S *BEAUTIFUL.* THIS IS A GOOD PLACE--

--I CAN REST HERE.

I'LL GO GET SOME WOOD, MAKE US A FIRE.

NO, STAY...

...I DON'T HAVE LONG.

YOU CAN'T SAY THAT. YOU HAVE TO *FIGHT* THIS--

NO--

--YOU'LL BE THE ONE DOING THE FIGHTING FOR BOTH OF US.

I WISH I COULD SEE IT, THOUGH. YOUR STRENGTH. YOUR PERSEVERANCE. YOUR *GOODNESS.* WHERE YOU'LL GO.

YOU'RE GOING TO GET FREE, STEVE-- NO MATTER *WHAT* THEY PUT IN YOUR WAY, YOU'RE GOING TO *OVERCOME* ALL THIS--IF YOU JUST...HOLD TRUE TO WHAT YOU BELIEVE...

...YOU WILL MAKE IT HOME.

AND IF WE KNEW WHAT HOPE WAS AGAIN--

--WE ALSO NOW KNEW WHAT ITS ABSENCE FELT LIKE.

WE FELT THE FEAR THAT COMES WITH THE CHANCE OF LOSING SOMETHING *CHERISHED.*

AND WE REALIZED HOW KEEN THEY WOULD BE TO STRIP IT FROM US. THAT WHEN THEY SAW WE BELIEVED AGAIN, IN EVEN THE ***POSSIBILITY*** OF A BETTER TOMORROW--

NEWARK.

--THEY WOULD ANSWER *TODAY.*

AND ANSWER IN *FULL MEASURE.*

LOVE YOU.

#$%€!

BOOM!

NOTMYMONEY. NOTMYMONEY. NOTMYMONEY.

DON'T WORRY--I'M NOT HERE FOR YOUR *MONEY.*

I'M HERE FOR YOUR *KNOWLEDGE.*

OKAY, ON SECOND THOUGHT, I ACTUALLY *HAVE* MORE MONEY--

YOU ARRANGED A MEETING TODAY BETWEEN TWO WOMEN. I'M VERY INTERESTED IN HEARING WHAT WAS SAID.

C-CAN'T SEE--WHO *ARE* YOU?

IT DON'T MATTER WHO I AM, FRED. IT MATTERS WHAT I *COULD* BE, IF YOU AND I DON'T COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING.

I COULD BE GOD'S RED RIGHT HAND. I COULD BE HIS SWIFT AND TERRIBLE VENGEANCE.

I COULD BE YOUR *PUNISHMENT.*

HAIL HYDRA.

TO BE CONTINUED!

Secret Empire

May

Captain America: Steve Rogers #17

In Cap we trust!

Captain America: Sam Wilson #22

Sam Wilson flies again!

Deadpool #31

Steve Rogers' red right hand has a job to do...

Beyond the Shield

Ultimates² #7

Will Galactus help the stranded heroes?

The Mighty Captain Marvel #5

Outnumbered & outgunned, Captain Marvel fights to keep hope alive!

Secret Empire

May

Secret Warriors #1

Quake assembles the next generation of Inhumans to take on Steve Rogers!

Secret Warriors #2

U.S.Avengers #6

Cap wants S.H.I.E.L.D.--and Roberto Da Costa is in his way.

Darkforce New York

Doctor Strange #21

Can the Sorcerer Supreme protect a city besieged by dark forces?

SECRET EMPIRE

NEXT

THE HEROES OF THE UNDERGROUND HAVE DISCOVERED THE SECRET TO SAVING CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUT TO GET WHAT THEY NEED, THEY'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ONE OF THEIR GREATEST ENEMIES: ULTRON.

SECRET EMPIRE: UNDERGROUND #1

SECRET EMPIRE: UPRISING #1

SECRET EMPIRE: UNITED #1

ZONE